WRITING: BUILDING CONTENT

STEP 1 – BRAINSTORM & CATEGORIZE:

After you take a stance on the prompt, brainstorm ideas, concepts, or examples that fit your stance. Then, group your ideas, concepts, and/or examples into your three subcategories for the body paragraphs. (\*HINT: Pick examples you **know** about!)

**PROMPT:**

Compassion or violence – which has a greater impact on society?

**EXAMPLES OF VIOLENCE:**

9/11, Holocaust, London Subway Bombings, Atomic bomb, Assassination of Political Figures (Kennedy, MLK), Lennon dies, Burning Monks in Vietnam, Columbine, VTech, Amish School Yard, Birmingham March (*police killing/injuring civilians*), Kent State, Darfur, Rwanda, Tiananmen Square in China, Crucifixion of Christ, DC Sniper, Laramie Project, Witch Hunts, Serial Killer Charles Manson & Ted Bundy, Any war, Native American Massacres

SCHOOL VIOLENCE: (1) Columbine, (2) VTech, (3) Amish School Yard

TERRORISM: (1) 9/11 (2) London Subway Bombings, (3)

ASSASINATIONS: (1) Kennedy, (2) MLK, (3) Lennon

GENOCIED: (1)Holocaust, (2) Darfur, (3) Rwanda

STEP 2 – ANALYSIS/IMPORTANCE:

Brainstorm specific impacts and/or importance of each example in relation to the prompt’s question. The more specific you can be the better!

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| --- | --- | --- |
| GENERAL CLAIM | SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF VIOLENCE | IMPACTS/IMPORTANCE |
| Terrorism | * 9/11 * London Subway Bombing * Spain bus bombing | * New airport regulations * National pride – flags * Racial Profiling |
| School Violence | * Columbine * VTech * Amish School yard | * Strict gun laws * New Safety Concerns (metal detectors, no backpacks, exit strategies/building plans) |

\*ANALYZING IMPACTS: *In light of the examples of violence you presented, did society change at all? Did we make new laws/regulations? Do we act/feel/behave differently? Did the structure of society, political views, or economy change? If so, those are IMPACTS. Explain them!*

**STEP 3 – DESCRIBE & WRITE**:

Now it’s time to put those ideas into paragraph form. Make sure as you’re explaining each example, you mention the specific impacts/importance of each as well as part of your analysis. Remember to always tie your analysis back to the prompt’s main question. As you’re going into detail it will help to try to reach the audience on a personal or emotional level.

*\*See other side for sample paragraphs.*

SAMPLE PARAGRAPHS

*Listed below are three sample paragraphs. Each body paragraph is based on the same claim and uses the same examples. They are just written in varying degrees of effectiveness.*

EX. 1 – POOR CONTENT:

***\*This paragraph has adequate examples, but gives little to no explanation. The paragraph feels like a grocery list of ideas.***

School violence is another type of vicious act that has tremendously impacted our society.

The first is the Virginia Tech shooting. Cho opened fired on the Virginia Tech campus killing over thirty people. Despite how terrible Virginia Tech was, the most defining act of school violence was undoubtedly Columbine. All in all, whether we want to admit it or not, both of these incidents impacted society greatly.

EX. 2 – VAGUE CONTENT:

***\*This paragraph has examples, but the details are vague or unclear.***

School violence is another type of vicious act that has tremendously impacted our society.

Cho Seung-Hi’s massacre at Virginia Tech still haunts college students and parents everywhere. Cho opened fired on the Virginia Tech campus killing over thirty people. Despite how terrible Virginia Tech was, the most defining act of school violence was undoubtedly Columbine. Families across America were stunned to hear about the massacre at Columbine High School. In an attempt to get revenge, two boys opened fire on unsuspecting classrooms, killing numerous innocent students and teachers. Investigators later found planned out “hit lists,” along with a stash of newly purchased weapons. **These atrocities marked the beginning of redefining gun laws and adding new school safety initiatives.**

EX. 3 – DETAILED CONTENT:

***\*This paragraph has examples, all of which are explained in detail.***

School violence is another type of vicious act that has tremendously impacted our society.

Visions of Cho Seung-Hi gloating about the people he murdered at Virginia Tech still haunt college students and parents everywhere. Cho opened fired on the Virginia Tech campus killing over thirty people. However, despite how terrible Virginia Tech was, the most defining act of school violence was undoubtedly Columbine. Families across America held their breath as news broke about the massacre at Columbine High School. In an attempt to get revenge on the jocks, and “cool crowd,” two boys dressed in dark trench coats opened fire on unsuspecting classrooms, killing numerous innocent students and teachers. Investigators later found planned out “hit lists” detailing the names of students who were to be murdered, along with a stash of newly purchased weapons. Both of these premeditated bloodbaths stunned the nation and forced legislators to re-evaluate gun laws. **How could such disturbed young men get permission to own or buy these types of weapons? Questions like these raged on. Because of Cho, not only has gun control become a hot topic across the country, but many colleges now prohibit guns on campus. Columbine specifically sparked the rush to redefine school safety initiatives. For some schools, that meant purchasing metal detectors and special locks to bar outside entrances from unwanted intruders. For other less fortunate schools, students were required to use clear or mesh backpacks in order to discourage students from bringing inappropriate weapons or devices into the building. All in all, whether we want to admit it or not, none of these changes would’ve come about had these young kids died. Because violence hits our homes the hardest, people are more willing to make changes.**